

Sale Urban District Council.

Medical Officer of Health's Report. 1898.

Gentlemen,

During the year 1898 there were 160 deaths (97 male + 63 female) which is equal to a death-rate of 12.8 per 1000.

In the same period there were 310 births (150 male + 160 female) which gives a birth-rate of 24.8 per 1000.

The 7 principal Zymotic diseases were fatal in 30 cases:- Scarlet Fever 2, Diphtheria 2, Typhoid Fever 1, Measles 10, Whooping-cough 1, Diarrhoea 13. The Zymotic rate is therefore 2.4 per 1000 per annum.

The following is a tabular comparison of the rates for the past 5 years:-

	<u>1894.</u>	<u>1895.</u>	<u>1896.</u>	<u>1897.</u>	<u>1898.</u>
Death-rate.	13.4	13.9	11.7	15.5	12.8
Birth-rate.	26.3	22.5	23.5	23.7	24.8
Zymotic-rate.	1.6	.6	.95	3.1	2.4

60 cases of infectious diseases were reported as against 82 last year. Scarlet Fever 34; Typhoid Fever 7, Diphtheria 13, Erysipelas 6.

A somewhat remarkable feature of the death-rate is its marked decline in the 4 successive quarters of the year. In March it was 15.5; In June 13.2; In September 12.8; In December 10.8. I do not remember any other occasion on which the December rate was so low as this:-

Scarlet Fever. A like, but still more striking, diminution marked the progress of the Scarlet Fever Epidemic, which was noted in the March report:-

In the March Quarter there were 22 cases
" " June " " 8 " "
" " September " " was 1 case
" " December " " were 3 cases.

In no less than 14 of these we were able to avail ourselves of the Monsall Hospital with the best results.

Measles, with the exception of Diarrhoea, proved the most fatal of the zymotic diseases. During the early part of the year, an epidemic of rather severe character, prevailed in the poorer parts of the district, especially in Egerton St. & Chapel Road. Of the 10 deaths attributable to this cause nearly all occurred in these neighbourhoods.

Diphtheria. Of the 13 cases reported 9 occurred in the March quarter. 2 in the June & 2 in the December quarter. In each case an effort was made to associate the outbreaks with some sanitary defect; but no conclusive evidence of such a connection could be established.

Typhoid Fever. One case in the September quarter almost certainly owed the infection to causes outside the district. The remaining 6, which occurred between September and the end of the year, were with one exception mild. They were chiefly among children.

Diarrhoea. 11 fatal cases were reported between June & October, or nearly 25% of the total number of deaths. 9 of these were in children under a year old. It is, to my mind, difficult to escape the conviction, that milk plays an important part in their production. In a serious & fatal outbreak of Diarrhoea in a large town, I have known the simple precaution of boiling all milk as soon as received, suffice to save many lives. And I have no doubt that the universal adoption of the practice of sterilizing milk as soon as it is drawn from the cow, would lead to a large reduction in the infant mortality from Diarrhoea.

Work Done:- In almost every case of infectious disease reported, the infected house was visited, sanitary defects enquired into, and directions given with the object of limiting contagion. Disinfection, both of bedding and room was carried out, in the one case by storming in Manchester, and in the other, by the Council's officials. Regular inspections of the district were made, and the result recorded in the form of a monthly report. The following are some of the Insanitary conditions included in those reports, and subsequently dealt with.

Defective Drains.	3.
Shops & Houses with cellar drains.	10.
Ashpits - defective in construction or otherwise insanitary.	} 47.
Nuisances arising from Pigeon and Rabbit coes.	
House - drainage passing into cesspool with overflow into water-course.	} 1.
Nuisances arising from deposit of night-soil.	
Bakehouses & Workrooms with insufficient sanitary convenience.	} 2.
Old-fashioned & defective water-closets.	
Houses, unhealthy owing to damp & dry-rot.	} 2.

The usual visits have been made by your Inspector to Lodging-Houses, Dairies, Slaughter-Houses &c. As the result of a report made last year at the instigation of the Nuisance Committee, certain changes for the better have taken place in the Chapel Road property (No 3. Court.) Many streets, too, in the Roebuck Lane neighbourhood, have been thoroughly paved and drained.

Occasionally complaints of nuisance arising from the street sewer-ventilators have reached me, but they have been less frequent than in former years. This improvement however, should only make us more determined to remove all causes of reproach in this respect in the future.

During 1898 we may say, I think, that the health of the district has been, on the whole satisfactory. Such epidemic disease, as we have had to deal with has been, in the main, of mild type; and considering that our district now includes several poor & somewhat crowded neighbourhoods, a general death-rate of 12.8 per 1000 may not unreasonably be regarded as matter for congratulation.

Signed

J. Sheldon Withers

